



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: June 18, 2020

Agenda Item: Mount Jumbo WMA Forest Management Project (Region 2, Missoula County)

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background:

FWP proposes to conduct forest management on the Mount Jumbo Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which is managed primarily to provide elk winter-range habitat. Conifer in-growth and expansion over the past 30 years have shaded out grasses, shrubs, and forbs, thereby reducing forage availability and habitat diversity as well as increasing fuel hazards and susceptibility to crown fire. Approximately 100 acres have been identified for treatment. FWP would use a combination of mechanical (e.g., logging and mastication) and non-mechanical (e.g., lop and scatter, pile and burn, broadcast burn) treatments to thin excessively dense conifer stands. Understory treatment of submerchantable trees less than 30 years old is the primary focus of the proposed project however portions of approximately 36 acres could be commercially thinned on southerly facing slopes to reduce crowding of larger diameter trees, open the understory, and create a more natural stand as it would be under the regular influence of fire.

FWP is coordinating this project with the Lolo National Forest (LNF), Missoula Ranger District which is implementing similar treatments on the on-going Marshall Woods Project on adjacent National Forest System Lands. Similar treatments are also being planned on adjacent Missoula City Parks land. The proposed treatments on the Mount Jumbo WMA compliment these projects by reducing hazardous fuels at a larger scale as well as increasing forage potential on elk winter-range.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

FWP has not yet sought public comment on this proposed forest management project. Upon endorsement from the Commission, FWP would engage with (LNF) staff to develop treatment plans and goals and develop an EA for public comment.

Alternatives and Analysis:

Proposal alternatives and analysis would be developed by FWP (upon endorsement by the Fish and Wildlife Commission) and released in a draft EA for 30-day public review/comment opportunity.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP recommends the Commission endorse this proposal, allowing the department to pursue and evaluate it and to offer opportunities for public review and comment.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Fish & Wildlife Commission endorse the proposed Mount WMA forest management project, allowing FWP to conduct further analysis and associated public review.